Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

7901 Westview Dr. Houston, TX 77055 Tel. 713-686-8253

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Rev. Jim Berggren **November 8, 2026** **24th Sunday after Pentecost**

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG **Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand** ELW 441

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C: ***Amen.***

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: ***Amen.***

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

C: ***We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.***

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthens you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: ***Amen.***

PASTORAL GREETING
THE KYRIE

CANTICLE OF PRAISE *This is the Feast*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also, with you.

P: Let us pray, together.

C: O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

November 8, 2026 - 24th Sunday After Pentecost

FIRST READING: Amos 5:18-24

The Day of the LORD

18 Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD!
Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light. 19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. 20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light— pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness? 21 "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.22 Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. 23 Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. 24 But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

The word of the Lord.
Congregation response following the reading is: ***Thanks be to God!***

THE PSALM **Psalm 70**

<u>SECOND READING:</u> 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Believers Who Have Died

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep
in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no
hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God
will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the
Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming
of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord
himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the
archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise
first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with
them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the
Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The word of the Lord.
Congregation response following the reading is: ***Thanks be to God!***

<u>GOSPEL ACCLAMATION</u>:

Alleluia.
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia.

<u>THE HOLY GOSPEL</u>: Matthew 25:1-13

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their
lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five
were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with
them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The
bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell
asleep.

6 "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to
the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

9 “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10 “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you; I don’t know you.’

13 “Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Congregational response: ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

CHILDREN’S SERMON

YOUTUBE VIDEO – 

PENTECOST 24A, 11-8-2026, Matthew 25:1-13

PREPARE-WAIT AND WATCH

Waiting and watching are not always pleasant things to do. They require preparation, patience, and a deep desire to participate in the future event. There is an art, and a science, to waiting and watching.

I had been in line since early dawn, outside of the Gulfgate Foleys. It had two entrances which converged on one escalator, from opposite directions. I was at the east entrance because it was a straight shot to the escalator leading up to the 2nd floor ticket office, where tickets for Prince’s 1984, *Purple Rain Tour*, were going on sale. These were days of the ancient past. No cell phones. No online ticket sales. Just hundreds of disgruntled people waiting impatiently. But not me. I had my ever-present paperback in my hip pocket. I had a plastic bag looped through my belt, containing a ham sandwich, two peaches, two peeled hard-boiled eggs and a Milky Way. I occasionally scanned the crowd for people who might be dangerous, or who might be friendly, during this marathon wait.

The managers unlocked the doors at 10:00. The crowds surged forward, crushing those of us who were near the front of the lines. I grew extra elbows to carve a safe space, and sprinted for the escalator along with the first wave of several hundred people. As I squeezed on the escalator, a breathless older lady from the west entrance, about to be trampled, reached her hand out as the stairs began to move me up. I grabbed her hands and hauled her up over the edge and told her, “We are together. I’ll run ahead. Find me in the line. I will run to the best place.”

Now, I had a friend. A co-conspirator. We alternated bathroom breaks and pay phone updates to our families, who would worry, and we kept our position, while splitting my modest brunch. Those less prepared lost their place and did not get tickets. There is an art to waiting and watching. It involves calculated preparation and a deep desire for a future event.

One of the problems of today's scripture is that the Bridegroom, the Lord, seems to be missing. He is out on business. He is wrapping up other plans. He seems to not be there, yet. He is a mysterious God who does not appear immediately, or obviously. He seems absent in that mystery. We have to have faith and trust in his presence in spite of his appearing to not show up on our timetable. Wait and watch. It'll happen.

This parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids is considered a Parable of Judgment. Parables of Judgment feature certain things:

1. At the beginning, EVERYONE is included. That is God's intention. God's Will. All are insiders until a few, distinguish themselves as outsiders. It's their choice.
2. We experience History and Time as linear. There is a beginning and an end and a judgment of too early, on time, or too late. Kind of like life. Dad would intone, "If you are on time, you are already too late. If you are 15 minutes early you are barely on time! In a linear system, judgment is built in. The crisis and the deadline are the point of the system.

The target is where the arrow is going, and every action getting it there is governed by the history-fulfilling judgment of the bull's eye at the end. You want to hit the bullseye. You prepare, watch and wait. You draw the arrow from the quiver, set it on the bowstring, wrap your fingers on the bowstring, draw back against the tension of the bow, aim, control breathing, release the arrow, into the flight path, the distance, the crosswind, the weight, the speed and trajectory……..crisis at every point. Jesus' parables of judgment are about an action going somewhere to happen. They are not about a recurring series of orbital 2nd chances. Miss the mark? The only second chance is grace and forgiveness from God Almighty.

Too early, or too late, too bad. Out of oil, shops are closed and the door is shut. No going back. God saves by grace only, this dynamic of history. Every moment is once and never again. God steps in. He saves history by moving into it, and experiencing its ambiguity and mortality with us in the body of Jesus the Christ.

Jesus tells us of ten virgin bridesmaids celebrating the marriage of the bridegroom. It is a giggling gaggle of growing girlish giddiness. Five foolish girls are planning for the usual, normal, noon-to-six celebration. Why did they even bother bringing lamps? What's the point of a lamp without oil? Anyway, all afternoon weddings are the same. No lamps necessary.

The five wise women look overpacked. They are weird. Lamps and oil, for an afternoon celebration? While the sun is still shining? Weird, but smart. What is a lamp without oil? A paper weight. A dust catcher. It is not a lamp until it is charged with oil and lit. The wise bridesmaids are prepared to watch and wait, because something always does go wrong. Murphy's Law, you know. Maybe there will be clouds and a dark storm. Maybe a solar eclipse. Maybe a dust storm. Maybe the Bridegroom is simply running behind schedule. Five are prepared.

I had a friend in high school who was OCD before obsessive-compulsion got all popular and stuff. One day in the locker room after football practice I asked him, "Why do you do that? You put on your jockeys, and then boxers, and then your gym shorts. Then you put your pants on and hold them up with a belt AND suspenders. Why? Don't things get a little crowded?"

He said, "If I have a car wreck, and break my arm, my suspenders will make a good sling. If I am bleeding, the belt will be a great tourniquet, and I can use the pant legs for bandages. If the car is totaled, I will still have gym shorts on to run for help." He had a plan. Just in case.

Now, you might want to count on your life being run by God in a much more respectable and better organized fashion, but while you are making your plans, be ready for God's possible alternate plan.

In real life, time runs out. The parable seems to say that since faith is a relationship with God, there will be a point where God claims us, as partners in the relationship. In a relationship, you relate. If you are out running around, worrying about yourself and other stuff, you will be avoiding the relationship. He will see whether we were invested in waiting and watching or not. We either say yes or no. You can't say maybe forever.

All of the bridesmaids were invited. Gifts will be given. The Bridal Registry at Heaven'sMart has one gift item listed. LAMPS! Nothing else. Just LAMPS. The invitation said, "'Come-As-You-Are and bring a lamp.'" 5 wedding gift lamps will be immediately available for the happy couple to use. 5 lamps will require extra effort to get the necessary oil and do the essential lamp maintenance. They are not useful yet. They won't be immediately useful. There is an implication here that this party might go on for a long time. The foolish bridesmaids dutifully bring their gift lamp that is unnecessary for an afternoon event, following the rules, just so they won't look funny, because clearly, they think that the wedding is about them, not the Bridegroom. "What will everybody be wearing? What are the colors? What is the menu? Does this lamp make me look fat? Should I take a Prilosec before dinner? We get it all worked out, and then the Bridegroom is late. None of those concerns address the person of the Bridegroom. They are about Self. Pure, undiluted self.

The wise virgins were planning for the long haul with God. They are focused enough to seem a little uppity. "There won't be enough if we give you our oil," doesn't seem like a whole lot of Christian charity. But this is a story about faith. We can encourage faith in each other, but we can't have faith for each other. I can't do aerobics for you. Please do my cardio so I can watch TV, eat pizza and popcorn and lose weight. In fact, I was kind of counting on <u>your</u> diet to make <u>me</u> skinny. The wise virgins accept that it doesn't work that way. The foolish virgins did have better options, other than trying to perfect their self-image. They could have confessed, "We brought the lamps but we have no oil. Nevertheless, we are here for you!" And the Bridegroom would have said, "That's the ticket! Come on in!"

If you trust God, you are a truster, living in his presence, whether he shows up early or late. Whether you are perfectly prepared or not. If we distrust, we close out the one important relationship with ultimate reality that is freely offered.

According to wedding custom, the bridegroom was about twelve hours late for his noon wedding. Five bridesmaids watched and waited and won. Five bridesmaids worried and wandered and went home empty. They didn't even relate very well to their companion watchers and waiters, the five wise women, who were prepared for unusual contingencies. One should try to learn from people like that. If the foolish ladies had been friendly at noon, they would have had conversations. They would have shared information and had plenty of time to improve and finalize their preparation for the Bridegroom. If they couldn't relate very well with other guests of the Bridegroom, they were not going to have much fun at the celebration anyway. They are too busy looking, to watch.

We watch for God and wait, because it would be a pity to miss all of the fun. We trust God and in so doing, we prepare for a variety of contingencies, because the world always comes up with a custom selection of interesting surprises just for you.

Jesus plainly says, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Most certainly, faith has a now or never urgency to it. We need it for the daily stuff, even as we wait and watch faithfully for the world-changing advent of the Bridegroom. We needlessly fear the finality of a last judgment, because the Lord evaluates us moment by moment in our devotion.

After all, we are watching for a good time. The Master of Ceremonies, the Perfect Bridegroom is Jesus Christ. Prepare, Watch and Wait. That is exciting! Talk to God and his people daily. Wait and watch for him when he seems distant. He is here, now! Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY **Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers** ELW 244

APOSTLES' CREED

P: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

C: I believe in God the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.



I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PEACE (*Please share the Peace with a neighbor*)

THE OFFERING

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together:

Eternal God, our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from you.
Receive what we offer, and all that you entrust us, until hungry no more, all the world is fed, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

AGNUS DEI

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have, mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in Eternal Life.

POST COMMUNION SONG *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Presider:

Holy God, we have received your never-ending mercy in this meal. You continuously seek the lost, bind the injured, and feed your people abundantly. Now send us out, awake to your presence, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG **Soon and Very Soon** ELW 439

GO IN PEACE, IN SERVICE

C: Thanks be to God!

PSALM 19:14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.



- Fred Abrego
- Susan Caradec
- Jessica Coleman
- Eli Gonzalez

- ♣ Jack Griffin
- ♣ Audrey Holtan
- ♣ Paul Houghton
- ♣ Joyce Huey
- ♣ Bryan Kile
- ♣ Ernest Luker
- ♣ David Magrill
- ♣ Stuffy Martinez
- ♣ Jeremy Mitchell
- ♣ Geraine Moore
- ♣ Ed Peterman
- ♣ Dorothy Preuss
- ♣ Scott Spates
- ♣ Patricia Steapp
- ♣ Gary Sundberg
- ♣ Bill Tempel
- ♣ Dave Trickett
- ♣ Jaime Urbanski
- ♣ Bennie Valites
- ♣ Michael Williams

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **November 29th**, at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: November **Team #** 05 **Leader:** Barbara Neumann

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

NOVEMBER

1 Reader — JR Abrego
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

8 Reader — Ruby Schaper
P/E — Julie Kilkenny

15 Reader — Bert Martin
P/E — Penny Schick

22 Reader — Linda Cuzzort
P/E — Sharon Wagner

29 Reader — Scott Wegner
P/E — Alma Byerly

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

ATTENTION HOLY CROSS MEMBERS

Following the Church Safety Protocol, if you would like to make a reservation to use the church facilities for church or private events, please contact Sussy.

You must to fill out a Calendar Request Form or send an email.

Thank you.

YOUTH GROUP

Come together in faith and friendship to our new Youth Group meetings.

We meet every 2nd and 4th Wednesday

from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.

Additional information will be available

on the church website: **holycross.us** and **Facebook.**

Pr. Jim Berggren

THANKOFFERING

Saturday, November 21, and **Sunday, November 22**

The idea of collecting in small offering boxes goes back to the very early 1800's when women formed "mite" or "cent" societies to raise money. Lutheran women were given small Thankoffering boxes to place in a special location in their homes as a visible reminder of blessings received.

Women would add coins to those boxes almost daily as particular blessings were noted. From their use came the idea of an annual church service to celebrate their collection.

Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joyfully give thanks for what God has given us. Thankofferings have always been and still are, our opportunity to say thank you to God in both significant and ordinary moments.

The women of Holy Cross are encouraged to express their thankfulness by donating "coins" and/or items for the East Spring Branch Food Pantry.

Nancy Beamesderfer

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

Fellowship Club will have a potluck Mexican Food Feast
Saturday, **November 21st,** 3:00 pm here at the church!

It's gonna be a good one!

Bring your favorite Mexican dish to share!

Nancy Beamesderfer

BABY CARE KITS
FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

With the birth of our daughter Laura's first child coming in January, I have felt the leading to help with making more Baby Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief.

I just can't imagine as an expecting mother not having the resources to keep my baby warm, clean and dry. I am asking for your help either donating money or items from the list below.

Sizes should be between 6 to 24 months.

Please contact me at (713) 870-1297 for any questions. I will also put up poster in the Family Life Center. Thank you so much for your love and support!

Alma Byerly

CROSS WALL

In Memory of	Donated by
Fredda Yurk	Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Fredda Yurk	Barbara Neumann
Marilyn Finer Collins	Her Family

Upcycled Crafty Ladies

THANKSGIVING LUNCH

GIVE THANKS TOGETHER!

Thursday, November 26, 2026

Doors Open: 11:30 AM | Lunch: 1:00 PM Family Life Center (Gym)

Join your Holy Cross family for a Thanksgiving Day lunch filled with good food, warm fellowship, and grateful hearts! All HCLC members and visitors, their families and friends, are warmly invited. Turkey and ham will be provided. If you are able, please bring a side dish, dessert, or beverage.

PLEASE RSVP!

Help us plan enough turkey and ham for everyone. Sign up at church with the number of adults and children attending and what you plan to bring. Or call/text Julie at 713-464-3430. We look forward to sharing Thanksgiving with you.

Safeguards Safety Training

Holy Cross Lutheran Church - 7901 Westview Drive, Houston, TX 77055

Call John Lambeth @ 713-854-8085 to register, or register online:

https://events.humanitix.com/host/634c6d6ed7a0c9053d9f6f58

Class		Price	Day	Date	Time
Adult & Pediatric CPR					
	CPR Only	$98	Saturday	14-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	CPR + First Aid	$108	Sunday	22-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support		$94	Friday	13-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	21-Nov	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
			Saturday	19-Dec	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm

CPR Instructor Course		$299	Friday	6-Nov	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
			Friday	11-Dec	9:00 am - 5:30 pm
RCP para adulto, niño y bebé			Friday	4-Dec	1:00 pm - 5:30 pm
	RCP solo	$49			
	RCP + primeros auxilios	$59			

Holy Cross Congregation Members receive a 15% discount.

Use coupon code: HCLC2026

SUNDAY'S SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. ***Traditional Worship*** *service with Rev. Jim Berggren —WC*

Sunday School / Nursery *- available for small children during the service — Crib Room*

10:30 a.m. ***Coffee fellowship*** *following the service —Gym*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

9 Mon	10 Tues	11 Wed	12 Thurs	13 Fri	14 Sat

11—12 *ELC Chapel –WC*	***11—12*** *ELC Chapel –WC*	***10 am*** *Roundtable Group –Annex* ***11 am*** *Choir Rehearsal –CL* ***12 pm*** *Bible Study –VR* ***6—8 pm*** *Youth Group meeting –YR*	***9—12 pm*** *Conference mtg. and Boundaries Training - Gulf Coast Synod –Annex* ***12—2 pm*** *Food Pantry Cooking class –Gym kitchen* ***1 pm*** *Ruth Circle meeting -VR* ***8 pm*** *AA Women mtg. —Annex*	***9 —5:30 pm*** *SST CPR Instructor Course MR/YR* ***1—5:30 pm*** *SST Basic Life Support --MR/YR*	***1—5:30 pm*** *SST Adult & Pediatric CPR –MR/YR* ***6 pm*** *Saturday Informal service –AT*

AT =Atrium, CL=Choir Loft, CR=Choir Room, ELC=Early Learning Center, FLC= Family Life Center = **GYM**, FLCA=**Annex**, KiM= Kids in Motion, MR=Media Room, VR=Volunteer Room, WC=Worship Center, YR=Youth Room,

SST=Safeguards Safety Training (CPR classes)